

there is not a man upon the earth whose authority can influence me, any farther than he comes with the authority of evidence, reason, and truth. To arrive at this state of mind is the result of man experiments and efforts; and to me has been arduous beyond expression. I have endeavored to read the Scriptures as though no one had read them before me; and I am as much on my guard against reading them today, through the medium of my own views yesterday, or a week ago, as I am against being influenced by any foreign name, authority or system whatever.”

We should all thank God for men like Alexander Campbell. The events that formed his love for the truth and hunger to know it are providential. If we had more people in this world devoted to finding the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, we would have more Christians. Campbell was the right man at the right time in history - a brilliant scholar when the world needing teaching. Campbell became a celebrity in the early days of America in much the way that Billy Graham is a celebrity today, but Campbell actually preached the truth. Next week we will examine some of his debates, and the issues which caused controversy later in his life. There are enough of Campbell's own writings surviving to this day to give us great insight into this man's life. His attitude toward the truth is one which all of us must emulate. He never sought to have men follow him into a new church, but only wished to restore the church of the New Testament. It is improper to think that the church of Christ is a denomination started by Alexander Campbell.

Warm Springs Road church of Christ
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Meeting Times

Sunday 9:30 Bible class, 10:30 worship, 1:00 worship

Wednesday 7:00 Bible class

LIFE LINES

The weekly bulletin of the Warm Springs Road Church of Christ

February 19, 2012

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, part I

Thomas Campbell published The Declaration and Address on September 7, 1809 revealing his desire to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. He had been in America for two years by himself. He had left his wife and children in Ireland. But they were making every effort to join him.

In March 1808, the family of Thomas Campbell received a letter from Thomas urging them to come to America. So the family prepared to leave. A smallpox epidemic delayed their departure until September. On September 28 the ship they were aboard attempted to put out to sea, but for various reasons was unable to do so until October 1. Even when they finally did put out to sea, the wind was bad and the ship did not get out of the lough. Eventually things went so wrong that the ship was wrecked and much family history of the Campbell's was lost. Alexander used this expensive delay as a time for meditation, and devoted himself to a life of preaching.

On November 8, 1808 Alexander Campbell entered Glasgow University where his father had gone many years before. He studied Greek, Logic, and was profoundly impacted by the "Common Sense" school of Scottish philosophy that was taught there at the time. While in Glasgow, Alexander came in contact with the various independent movements in the Presbyterian church. Grenville Ewing, who founded the theological school at Glasgow, became one of Campbell's very good friends. Ewing was connected with the independent movement led by James and Robert Haldane. Campbell was also influenced by the movement led by John Glas and Robert Sandeman. These groups broke from the church of Scotland because of the cold formalism and were advocating weekly observance of the Lord's Supper and a plurality of elders in one local congregation. They denied that creeds or confessions of faith were worth anything. The difference between the two groups was that the Haldanes avoided controversy while Sandeman sought it. Through the influence of these groups, Alexander Campbell developed an intensely independent spirit and began examining for himself the claims of the Seceder Church as a religious group. The crucial hour in his doubt of the church for which his father had preached was at the semi-annual communion service near the end of his stay in Glasgow. It was the custom to give all who were to partake of the Lord's Supper a metallic token to shut out the "unworthies" of partaking. As Campbell had come from Ireland without any letter or recommendation, it was necessary for him to take an examination before the elders on Saturday to determine his worthiness. He took the examination and passed. But the next day, his conscience hurt him. He put his token in the plate that morning and refused to partake of the communion. He was leaving the Seceder church at very much the same time his father was, without any knowledge of his father's doings!

On July 31, 1809, Alexander Campbell left Glasgow. Four days later, he and his family were on the ship, *Latonia*, headed for America. This time the trip went smoothly, and the ship landed at New York on Friday, September 29. Within two weeks, they had reunited with Thomas near Washington, Pennsylvania. There was much to talk about!

It had been basically one month since the Declaration and Address had been published when Thomas and Alexander Campbell were reunited. Alexander listened patiently as his father related to him everything that had happened regarding his leaving the Seceder Church. Then Alexander related to Thomas the events that led him to the same decision. Each was saddened with the conditions that prevailed in religious partyism, but each felt confident that the answer lay in a more complete return to the Scriptures. Thoughtfully did Alexander Campbell read the Declaration and Address through. Handing it back to his father, he expressed his approval of it, and his determination to devote his life to proclaiming the principles contained in it. Furthermore, he explained his determination to retire to his chamber, and spend six months in a careful study of the Bible. Then he announced that he would spend his life preaching the Divine Word, and for that preaching, he would never accept financial compensation. His father replied, "Upon these principles, my dear son, I fear that you will have to wear many a ragged coat."

As a boy, Alexander Campbell memorized rich passages in Greek, Roman, French, and English literature. In later years many marvelled at the knowledge which Campbell possessed. Tolbert Fanning said of him, "[W]e never saw a man so perfectly familiar with the most important events recorded in the Sacred oracles, particularly the Old Testament, and also in Greek, Roman and English history. Singular as it may appear, Alexander Campbell could recite and fully appreciate more of the English poets, especially Milton, Shakespeare, Thompson and Young, than any one with whom we have had the satisfaction of associating." He seemed to have little desire for modern productions of literature. Everything from the Reformation (Luther, Calvin, etc.) movement on back to ancient history (Plato, Euclid, etc.) he knew extensively.

There was one object always before Alexander Campbell: Truth. He wanted the truth more than he wanted anything else. He himself wrote, "Often have I said, and often have I written, that *truth*, truth eternal and divine, is now, and long has been with me the *pearl of great price*. To her I will, with the blessing of God, sacrifice everything. But on no altar will offer her a victim. If I have lost sight of her, God who searcheth the hearts knows I have not done it intentionally. With my whole heart I have sought the *truth*, and I know that I have found it." In 1824 he wrote, "For the last ten years I have not looked into the works of these men; and have lost the taste which I once had for controversial reading of this sort, and during this period my inquiries into the Christian religion have been almost exclusively confined to the Holy Scriptures. And I can assure you that the Scriptures, when made their own interpreter, and accompanied with earnest desires to the author of these writings, have become, to me, a book entirely new and unlike what they were when read and consulted as a book of reference--... I call no man master upon the earth; and although my own father has been a diligent student, and a teacher of the Christian religion since his youth; and, in my opinion, understands this book as well as any person with whom I am acquainted, yet there is no man with whom I have debated more, and reasoned more, on all subjects, than he -- I have been so long disciplined in the school of free inquiry, that, if I know my own mind, **[cont. Page 4]**

Church Announcements

1. Remember our sick and shut-ins and those that are traveling.
2. Remember Mary Mergler, Pat Campbell, Margaret Hines, Russell Patrick, Geraldine Wilkins, June Poyner, Dot Debice, and OP Boling and others are in need of our prayers.
3. We are putting together a new directory. It will have pictures! Mike Foley is prepared to take your picture today if you are. James Thompson has an information form for you to fill out.
4. Forrest Youngblood is recovering.
5. Eufaula is having a Gospel Meeting March 4-8 with Elliot Glasgow from Cusseta Rd. Services begin at 7 pm central each night.
6. Today (02/19) is our third Sunday fellowship, singing, and business meeting.
7. Check out the redesigned website! It's loaded with features for members, so if you don't have a login and password, see Casey Hergett. www.wsrcoc.com

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, February 19

Opening Singing	C. Hergett
Table & Giving	G. Kendrick
Assisting	R. Nealy
	C. Brown
	J. Thompson
	M. Sizemore
	M. Mendez
Sermon AM	D. Dixon
Sermon PM	Singing
Closing Prayer	L. Poyner
Alternate	M. Foley

Sunday, February 26

Opening Singing	G. McMurray
Table & Giving	G. Kendrick
Assisting	B. Patrick
	C. Hergett
	D. Johnson
	F. Youngblood
	M. Foley
Sermon AM	D. Dixon
Sermon PM	D. Dixon
Closing Prayer	G. McMurray
Alternate	C. Brown

Wednesday, February 22

Invitation	D. Dixon
Invitation Song	C. Brown
Prayer	M. Foley